



Notice

Request for Letters of Intent to Apply for FY2005 Grant Funding

Legal Services Corporation Technology Initiative Grants

2005

**Legal Services Corporation
Technology Innovative Grant Program
Request for Letters of Intent to Apply for FY2005 Grant Funding**

Summary

The Legal Services Corporation (LSC) issues this Notice describing the conditions under which Letters of Intent will be received for Technology Initiative Grants program. This grant program provides an integral tool to help achieve LSC's goal of dramatically increasing the quantity and quality of legal services provided eligible persons. TIG-funded projects develop, test and replicate innovative technologies that can enable grant recipients and state justice communities to improve clients' access to high quality legal assistance.

All prospective applicants for 2005 funds from the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) Technology Innovation Grant (TIG) program must submit a "letter of intent" prior to submitting a formal application. Based on its analysis of the information provided in the letters of intent, LSC will solicit full proposals only for those projects that have a reasonable chance of success in the grant competition process.

Given the significant reduction in available funds in the 2005 grant cycle and based on input from the field and from other interested parties, LSC has determined that the submission and review of letters of intent will enable prospective applicants to vet their project ideas with TIG staff, who can identify those projects that have a reasonable chance of success in the competitive grant process. This initial review of prospective applicants will ensure that those with little likelihood of success will not unnecessarily expend their own and potential partners' scarce resources necessary to develop a full proposal that ultimately would not be successful.

The format and contents of the letters of intent should conform to the requirements specified below in the section on *Letter Requirements and Format*.

Funding Availability

Approximately \$1.27 million will be available for this program. Given this funding amount LSC expects this to be an extremely competitive year.

Grant Categories

Since the inception of TIG, LSC has worked with our grantees to coordinate the expansion of our technological capacity to expand access to justice. Through TIG, statewide web sites have been created in 52 jurisdictions; there is now a National HotDocs Server available to all LSC funded programs and partners at no cost; and NTAP, LSTech, and LegalMeetings are available to our programs, at no cost, to help them learn, exchange ideas, and work together. Working with our partners, such as NLADA and the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, we have developed a National Index for web content that, using the work piloted by TIG on XML, will allow a search of one web site to return results from all web sites.

Because of the reduction in the TIG appropriation from \$2,977,000 in 2004 to \$1,272,000, LSC will not be able to fund as many projects as it has in the past. Therefore, the focus of the 2005 grants will be on sustaining ongoing technology initiatives that serve all LSC funded programs. LSC will also consider new, innovative projects that have large significance to the delivery system, are easily replicable, can be done for a relatively modest cost, and that show how the new technological capacity can be interwoven with our traditional delivery system to create an integrated, coordinated approach to serving clients. Consequently, this year we are only going to have two categories-- web sites and an open category.

It is our hope that TIG funding for next year will increase. The Administration's budget for 2006 has specified \$3,500,000 for the TIG program and LSC's budget request has a line item for TIG at \$5,000,000. Every effort will be made to ensure more adequate earmarked funding for TIG in 2006, albeit not at the expense of necessary field funding.

Descriptions of successful projects from prior grant cycles can be found at www.lstech.org. **In FY 2005, LSC will accept projects in two application categories as set out below:**

1. Web Sites

A. New Web Sites

In the 2000 round of TIG grants, LSC funded projects to develop web templates that could serve as patterns for statewide web sites. We want to encourage states to implement one of these two templates. LSC will accept letters of intent for statewide websites selecting one of the two available templates for up to \$50,000. We cannot guarantee additional funds for recipients of first-time TIG grants awarded in 2005.

To view a sample Kaivo template go to www.kaivo.com/TIG and for Probono.net go to www.lawhelp.org.

Maximum grant amount in this category is \$50,000.

B. Renewal Web Sites

Recipients of TIG 2001, 2002, 2003 or 2004 statewide web site grants who have not already received a renewal grant, and who anticipate they will complete, report on and be approved by LSC for successful achievement of their milestones through *the third payment milestones by May 15, 2005*, may submit a letter of intent for additional funding up to \$25,000.

Maximum grant amount in this category is \$25,000.

C. Continuation Web Site Funding

Recipients of TIG 2001, 2002, 2003 or 2004 statewide web site grants, who have received a renewal web site grant, and who anticipate they will complete, report on and be approved by LSC for successful achievement of their renewal grant *first payment milestones by May 15, 2005*, may submit a letter of intent for additional funding up to \$25,000.

Maximum grant amount in this category is \$25,000 for twenty-four months.

2. Open Category

The only other category available in 2005 is the Open Category. All non-website grants should be applied for in the Open Category. Specifically, all grants that are *not* First Year, Second Year, or Third Year website grants should apply in the Open Category. Circuit Rider grants, Template Enhancement grants, etc would fall under the Open Category, not the Website grant categories.

This category has no funding limit or matching requirement. There is only one criterion - we will consider any idea (large or small) as long as the purpose of the proposal is to expand the use of technology to increase and/or improve the delivery of legal services to eligible clients.

That said, given the significantly reduced funding level for the TIG program this year, applications with broad applicability and/or that directly address initiatives that have impact throughout the legal services community will receive most favorable consideration. While we do not require matching funds, projects with strong support from other partners will be favorably received.

For applications that don't have such broad impact, carefully consider the size of your request. Small, focused, pilot projects that balance risk and reward in a cost effective way are imminently more fundable than projects that lack such balance.

One Project Per Letter of Intent

Programs may submit multiple Letters of Intent (LOI) for multiple projects. Each project for which you seek funding should be submitted by a separate LOI. For example, do not combine a request for a statewide web site grant with a request for a grant to expand the intake system.

Letter Requirements and Format

The letter of intent should be no more than two pages in length. The pages shall be single spaced, all four margins of the pages must be one inch, and the font must be in 12-point type. The LOI should concisely provide the following information about the proposed project.

1. **Category** – list the category under which you are applying
2. **Description of Project** - Briefly describe the basic elements of the system(s), how they will be developed, how they will operate, the function they will serve within the legal services delivery system, their expected impact, and similar factors. (The impact should only be highlighted here; more details about the system's benefits should be provided below.)
3. **Major benefits.** Describe the specific ways in which the system(s) will increase or improve services to clients and/or enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of

program operations. To the extent feasible, discuss both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of these benefits.

4. **Estimated costs.** Start by stating how much you are seeking from TIG, then give the estimated total project cost, summarizing the anticipated costs of the major components of the project. List anticipated contributions, both in-kind and monetary, of all partners in the project.
5. **Major partners.** Identify organizations that are expected to be important partners. Specify the role(s) each partner will play.
6. **Innovation/Replication/Sustainability.** Identify how and why the proposed project is new and innovative. Identify how and why the proposed project can significantly benefit and/or be replicated by other legal services providers or the community at large. Identify how the proposed project will be maintained to ensure sustainability.

Waiver Authority

It is the general intent of LSC not to waive any of the provisions set forth in this Notice. However, under extraordinary circumstances and when it is in the best interest of our targeted client community, LSC, upon its own initiative or when requested, may waive provisions in this Notice. Waivers may only be granted for requirements that are discretionary and not mandated by statute or regulation. Any request for a waiver must set forth the extraordinary circumstances for the request and be included in the application. LSC will not consider a request to waive the deadline for a letter of intent unless the waiver request is received by LSC prior to the deadline.

Eligible Organizations

TIG grants are available to existing LSC program grantees only. Although other entities are not eligible to apply, they are encouraged to participate as project partners.

LOI Deadline

Letters of Intent should be submitted in hard copy format and must be received at LSC no later than 5:00 pm EST, Friday, April 8, 2005.

Non-conforming Letters of Intent

LSC will initially review all letters of intent to determine whether they conform with the required format and clearly present all of the required elements. These requirements are listed and described in the section on *Letter Requirements and Format*. Failure to meet these requirements may result in rejection of the letter of intent.